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WISCONSIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

APRIL 1989

DILHR
DEPARTMENT OF
INDUSTRY, LABOR & HUMAN RELATIONS

WISCONSIN DATA AND SOURCES

	INDICATOR	SOURCES
L1	Composite Index of Leading Indicators	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
L2	Average Work Week, Manufacturing	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
L3	Average Overtime Hours, Mfg.	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
L4	Average Weekly Initial Claims	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
L5	Total Job Openings Received	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
L6	New Business Incorporations	Wisconsin Secretary of State
L7	Net Gain in Business Phone Access Lines	WI Telephone Co. and General Telephone Co.
L8	Building Plans Examined	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
C1	Help-Wanted Advertising Index (MPW)	National Industrial Conference Board
C2	Total Unemployment Rate	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
C3	Natural Gas Sales	Wisconsin Public Service Commission
C4	New Car Registrations	WI Dept. of Transportation
C5	Electric Power Sales	Wisconsin Public Service Commission
C6	Total Security Registrations	Wisconsin Commissioner of Securities
C7	Manufacturing Employment	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
C8	Average Weekly Earnings, Mfg.	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
C9	Cash Receipts From Farm Marketing	U.S. Department of Agriculture
C10	Contract Construction Employment	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
x1	Birth Registrations	WI Dept. of Health and Social Services
x2	Death Registrations	WI Dept. of Health and Social Services
x3	Natural Net Gain in Population	WI Dept. of Health and Social Services
x4	Marriage Registrations	WI Dept. of Health and Social Services
x5	Consumer Price Index (Milwaukee)	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
x6	Index of Prices Received By Farmers	Wisconsin Department of Agriculture
x7	Net Gain in Residential Phone Access Lines	WI Telephone Co. and General Telephone Co.
x8	Labor Disputes, No. of Workers	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations
x9	Unemployment Compensation Exhaustees	WI Dept. of Industry, Labor and Human Relations

NOTES: Selected series are seasonally adjusted by the Bureau of the Census X-11 Variant of the census Method 11 Seasonal Adjustment Program.

SECTION A is a summary of recent data and current changes for all indicators and is presented in chart form. The indicators are presented with cyclical timing as the principle basis of classification.

SECTION B is a summary of Wisconsin Labor Force Estimates, including Employment, Unemployment and Unemployment Rates, and selected U.S. data.

SECTION C analyzes the Wisconsin labor force by industry and by specified Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

SECTION D singles out certain economic time series as being leading of coinciding in relation to movements in aggregate economic activity. They are seasonally adjusted and presented graphically.

COVER PHOTO: Courtesy of Wisconsin Division of Tourism Development.

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

SUMMARY FOR MARCH

COMPOSITE INDEX

Wisconsin's Composite Index of leading indicators decreased in March to 106.6 percentage points. That is a large drop, 5.1 points, from one month ago, but the index level is still above that of two months ago.

Two economic indicators, the total number of job openings received by Job Service offices and the number of building plans examined, caused the decrease. Both increased, but at less than the normal seasonal amount for March.

Economists are reluctant to predict an economic decline until leading indicators have had three consecutive monthly decreases.

LEADING INDICATORS

Production workers in Wisconsin's manufacturing industries spent 41.5 hours per week on the job. That average is exactly the same as one month earlier which is normal for the February to March period. Overtime hours decreased slightly, but less than is normal for March.

Along with the steady workweek average, total employment in manufacturing increased by thirteen hundred workers. That is slightly below par for March. However, the total labor input into manufacturing, the number employed times the hours worked, did increase.

The average number of weekly initial claims for unemployment compensation decreased by over two hundred in March. That seems small, and a decrease of about three hundred would be normal this month. Total unemployment increased by about 6400 in March, but six thousand of that was due to labor force growth and only about three-hundred was due to a decrease of employment.

The total number of job openings received at public Job Service offices throughout the state increased by over nine-hundred. That is short of the normal seasonal trend. An increase of about 2100 would be normal for March.

New business incorporations increased in March by over a hundred to 665 for the month. That is well above the normal seasonal trend.

The net gain in business telephone access lines decreased by 45, a slight amount. The access line net usually declines by much more than that in March.

The number of commercial and industrial building plans examined in March increased, but only slightly. A normal increase would amount to about 125, thus, this months growth is subpar.

Section

A WISCONSIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

INDICATOR	UNIT	MONTHLY SERIES			% CHANGE		AVG.
		Latest Month	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago	1988
LEADING INDICATORS							
L1 COMPOSITE INDEX OF LEADING INDICATORS							
Seasonally Adjusted	Index	MARCH	106.6	111.7	111.6	-4.6%	-4.5%	97.9
L2 AVG. WORK WEEK, MFG.							
Unadjusted	Hours	MARCH	41.5	41.5	41.5	0.0%	0.0%	41.7
Seasonally Adjusted			41.7	41.7	41.7	0.0%	0.0%	
L3 AVG. OVERTIME HOURS, MFG.							
Unadjusted	Hours	MARCH	3.9	4.0	3.8	-2.5%	2.6%	4.1
Seasonally Adjusted			4.2	4.1	4.1	2.4%	2.4%	
L4 AVG. WEEKLY INITIAL CLAIMS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH	7366	7584	6579	-2.9%	12.0%	6833
Seasonally Adjusted			7594	7501	6784	1.2%	11.9%	
L5 TOTAL JOB OPENINGS RECEIVED							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH	7339	6435	7807	14.0%	-6.0%	8063
Seasonally Adjusted			7677	8925	8163	-14.0%	-6.0%	
L6 NEW BUSINESS INCORPORATIONS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH	665	560	683	18.8%	-2.6%	595
Seasonally Adjusted			643	603	660	6.6%	-2.6%	
L7 NET GAIN IN BUSINESS TELEPHONE ACCESS LINES							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH	2384	2429	2801	-1.9%	-14.9%	2471
Seasonally Adjusted			2622	2582	2750	1.5%	-4.7%	
L8 BUILDING PLANS EXAMINED							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH	475	457	527	3.9%	-9.9%	613
Seasonally Adjusted			572	701	634	-18.4%	-9.8%	
COINCIDING INDICATORS							
C1 HELP-WANTED INDEX (MILW.)							
Seasonally Adjusted	Index	MARCH	87	90	91	-3.3%	-4.4%	97
C2 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, TOTAL							
Unadjusted	Percent	MARCH	5.2	4.9	5.5	.....	.....	4.3
Seasonally Adjusted			4.5	4.2	4.9	.....	.....	
C3 NATURAL GAS SALES							
Unadjusted	Mil.	FEB	366.4	342.9	360.5	6.9%	1.6%	190.9
Seasonally Adjusted	Therms		212.9	170.1	209.4	25.2%	1.7%	
C4 NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH	11,535	12,193	15,946	-5.4%	-27.7%	14,734
Seasonally Adjusted			11,505	14,566	15,891	-21.0%	-27.6%	
C5 ELECTRIC POWER SALES							
Unadjusted	Mil. KWH	FEB	2303.1	2363.1	2294.5	-2.5%	0.4%	2397.3
Seasonally Adjusted			2342.9	2360.7	2446.6	-0.8%	-4.2%	
C6 TOTAL SECURITIES REGISTRATIONS							
Unadjusted	Mil. Dol.	MARCH	214.7	42.4	164.1	406.4%	30.8%	156.1
Seasonally Adjusted			203.9	33.4	155.8	510.5%	30.9%	

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A WISCONSIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

INDICATOR	UNIT	MONTHLY SERIES			% CHANGE		AVG.
		Latest Month	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago	1988
C7 MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT							
Unadjusted	Thous.	MARCH 551.8	550.5	536.6	0.2%	2.8%	550.7
Seasonally Adjusted		561.9	562.9	546.4	-0.2%	2.8%	
C8 AVG. WEEKLY EARNINGS, MFG.							
Unadjusted	Dollars	MARCH $445.71	$446.54	$441.56	-0.2%	0.9%	$443.48
Seasonally Adjusted		$443.93	$445.20	$439.65	-0.3%	1.0%	
C9 CASH RECEIPTS FROM FARM MKTG.							
Unadjusted	Mil. Dol.	DEC 439.1	462.2	434.8	-5.0%	1.0%	410.5
Seasonally Adjusted		404.6	409.5	400.3	-1.2%	1.1%	
C10 CONTRACT CONSTRUCTION EMPL.							
Unadjusted	Thous.	MARCH 64.4	64.1	62.4	0.5%	3.2%	71.5
Seasonally Adjusted		79.2	80.5	76.7	-1.6%	3.3%	
OTHER KEY INDICATORS							
X1 BIRTH REGISTRATIONS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 5161	3678	5994	40.3%	-13.9%	5905
Seasonally Adjusted		5001	4105	5809	21.8%	-13.9%	
X2 DEATH REGISTRATIONS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 3106	3386	3812	-8.3%	-18.5%	3632
Seasonally Adjusted		2892	3403	3550	-15.0%	-18.5%	
X3 NATURAL NET GAIN POPULATION							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 2055	292	2182	603.8%	-5.8%	2274
Seasonally Adjusted		2130	370	2261	475.7%	-5.8%	
X4 MARRIAGE REGISTRATIONS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 1828	1522	1785	20.1%	2.4%	3468
Seasonally Adjusted		3475	3112	3396	11.7%	2.3%	
X5 CONSUMER PRICE INDEX			(Jun '88)	(Dec '87)			
Unadjusted (1982-1984 = 100)	Index	DEC 117.2	114.5	113.0	2.4%	3.7%	115.9
X6 PRICES RECEIVED BY FARMERS							
Unadjusted	Index	FEB 143	146	131	-2.1%	9.2%	135
Seasonally Adjusted		143	144	131	-0.7%	9.2%	
X7 NET GAIN IN RESIDENTIAL TELEPHONE ACCESS LINES							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 2471	61	1743	3950.8%	41.8%	2208
Seasonally Adjusted		1879	1864	1929	0.8%	-2.6%	
X8 LABOR DISPUTES, NO. OF WORKERS							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 435	235	11	85.1%	3854.5%	107
Seasonally Adjusted		1450	308	37	370.8%	3818.9%	
X9 UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXHAUSTEES							
Unadjusted	Number	MARCH 9,930	9,349	15,673	6.2%	-36.6%	14102
Seasonally Adjusted		9,940	9,862	15,693	0.8%	-36.7%	

Section

B LABOR FORCE ESTIMATES

WISCONSIN LABOR FORCE ESTIMATES MARCH	(In Thousands)			% CHANGE	
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago
Unadjusted					
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	2595.1	2589.1	2529.0	0.2%	2.6%
Employment (incl. Labor Disputes)	2461.2	2461.5	2389.2	-0.0%	3.0%
Unemployment	133.9	127.5	139.8	5.0%	-4.2%
Unemployment Rate	5.2	4.9	5.5	.....	.....
Seasonally Adjusted					
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	2633.8	2635.9	2564.8	-0.1%	2.7%
Employment (incl. Labor Disputes)	2514.0	2524.6	2439.8	-0.4%	3.0%
Unemployment	119.8	111.3	125.0	7.6%	-4.2%
Unemployment Rate	4.5	4.2	4.9	.....	.....

WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES MARCH	(In Thousands)			% CHANGE	
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago
Unadjusted					
TOTAL NONFARM WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS	2156.6	2150.4	2099.5	0.3%	2.7%
Manufacturing	551.4	550.3	536.6	0.2%	2.8%
Mining	2.0	1.7	1.6	17.6%	25.0%
Contract Construction	64.4	64.1	62.4	0.5%	3.2%
Transportation and Public Utilities	98.7	98.2	95.1	0.5%	3.8%
Electric, Gas and Sanitary Services	17.1	17.1	17.3	0.0%	-1.2%
Wholesale Trade	108.5	107.9	107.4	0.6%	1.0%
Retail Trade	390.3	388.6	380.1	0.4%	2.7%
General Merchandise	46.5	46.8	47.8	-0.6%	-2.7%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	116.8	116.7	113.8	0.1%	2.6%
Banking	27.6	27.7	27.4	-0.4%	0.7%
Insurance	41.5	41.5	40.0	0.0%	3.8%
Service and Miscellaneous	485.3	484.2	470.7	0.2%	3.1%
Hospitals	73.1	72.9	71.1	0.3%	2.8%
Private Education	26.3	26.1	25.5	0.8%	3.1%
Government	339.2	338.7	331.8	0.1%	2.2%
State Government	87.7	87.3	84.5	0.5%	3.8%
Local Government	222.1	222.0	218.4	0.0%	1.7%

UNITED STATES LABOR FORCE ESTIMATES MARCH	(In Thousands)			% CHANGE	
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago
Seasonally Adjusted					
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	123,264	123,181	120,936	0.1%	1.9%
Employment (incl. Labor Disputes)	117,136	116,853	114,129	0.2%	2.6%
Unemployment	6,128	6,328	6,807	-3.2%	-10.0%
Unemployment Rate	5.0%	5.1%	5.6%	.....	.....

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT Unadjusted MARCH	(In Thousands)			% CHANGE	
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago
All Manufacturing (Incl. Canning)	551.4	550.3	536.6	0.2%	2.8%
All Manufacturing (Excl. Canning)	543.7	543.1	528.8	0.1%	2.8%
Durable Goods	341.4	341.6	331.2	-0.1%	3.1%
Lumber and Wood Products (Excl. Furniture)	28.0	27.6	26.8	1.4%	4.5%
Furniture and Fixtures	12.2	12.0	11.5	1.7%	6.1%
Stone, Clay, and Glass Products	8.4	8.2	8.2	2.4%	2.4%
Primary Metal Industries	23.2	23.2	20.9	0.0%	11.0%
Iron and Steel Foundries	11.7	11.7	10.5	0.0%	11.4%
Fabricated Metal Products	59.3	59.2	55.9	0.2%	6.1%
Fabricated Structural Metal Products	14.0	14.1	13.5	-0.7%	3.7%
Metal Stampings	11.4	11.4	11.1	0.0%	2.7%
Machinery (Excl. Electrical)	109.8	110.6	106.4	-0.7%	3.2%
Engines and Turbines	19.2	19.5	20.8	-1.5%	-7.7%
Farm Machinery and Equipment	13.3	13.3	13.0	0.0%	2.3%
Constr.,Mining, Material Handling Machinery	11.7	11.8	11.0	-0.8%	6.4%
Metalworking Machinery and Equipment	13.9	13.8	12.4	0.7%	12.1%
Special Ind. Mach., Excl. Metalworking	14.2	14.4	13.5	-1.4%	5.2%
Gen. Industrial Mach. and Equip.	15.1	15.1	13.5	0.0%	11.9%
Electrical Machinery, Equip. and Supplies	47.4	47.7	46.7	-0.6%	1.5%
Electrical Industrial Apparatus	15.7	15.8	15.5	-0.6%	1.3%
Transportation Equipment	29.8	29.9	32.7	-0.3%	-8.9%
Motor Vehicles and Equipment	22.7	22.9	25.4	-0.9%	-10.6%
Instrument and Related Products	13.1	13.0	12.6	0.8%	4.0%
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	10.2	10.2	9.5	0.0%	7.4%
Nondurable Goods	210.0	208.7	205.4	0.6%	2.2%
Food and Kindred Products	58.6	57.8	57.6	1.4%	1.7%
Meat Products	14.3	14.3	13.7	0.0%	4.4%
Dairy Products	17.4	17.2	17.0	1.2%	2.4%
Canning and Preserving	7.6	7.0	7.9	8.6%	-3.8%
Bakery Products	4.6	4.5	4.3	2.2%	7.0%
Beverage Industries	7.6	7.6	7.7	0.0%	-1.3%
Textile Mill Products	4.4	4.3	4.6	2.3%	-4.3%
Apparel and Other Finished Products	7.2	7.3	7.5	-1.4%	-4.0%
Paper and Allied Products	49.7	49.6	49.2	0.2%	1.0%
Pulp and Paper Mills	29.8	29.8	29.8	0.0%	0.0%
Printing, Publishing and Allied Products	45.2	44.8	43.3	0.9%	4.4%
Chemicals and Allied Products	10.5	10.5	10.3	0.0%	1.9%
Rubber and Misc. Plastics Products	28.1	28.0	25.9	0.4%	8.5%
Miscellaneous Plastics Products	23.6	23.5	21.5	0.4%	9.8%
Leather and Leather Products	6.1	6.2	6.7	-1.6%	-9.0%

Section

C

WISCONSIN EARNINGS AND HOURS DATA

EARNINGS AND HOURS Unadjusted MARCH	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours		
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago
All Manufacturing (Incl. Canning)	$445.71	$446.54	$441.56	41.5	41.5	41.5
All Manufacturing (Excl. Canning)	446.54	448.45	442.81	41.5	41.6	41.5
Durable Goods	449.94	452.52	452.15	41.7	41.9	42.1
Lumber and Wood Products (Excl. Furniture)	322.76	319.87	314.81	39.7	39.2	39.4
Furniture and Fixtures	364.66	368.39	349.59	42.8	43.7	43.0
Stone, Clay, and Glass Products	437.78	440.70	427.33	44.9	45.2	44.7
Primary Metal Industries	461.91	466.92	451.42	43.7	44.3	44.3
Iron and Steel Foundries	476.39	480.24	455.54	45.5	46.0	45.6
Fabricated Metal Products	424.98	422.51	422.69	41.3	41.1	41.4
Fabricated Structural Metal Products	435.37	420.75	433.16	42.6	41.7	43.1
Metal Stampings	483.84	490.88	458.08	42.0	42.5	40.9
Machinery (Excl. Electrical)	500.33	507.35	506.34	42.8	43.4	43.5
Engines and Turbines	502.74	536.18	552.98	39.4	41.5	42.8
Farm Machinery and Equipment	523.64	537.15	541.45	42.4	43.6	44.2
Constr.,Mining, Material Handling Machinery	518.47	497.08	484.78	44.2	43.0	43.4
Metalworking Machinery and Equipment	557.95	566.59	555.41	44.6	45.4	45.6
Special Ind. Mach., Excl. Metalworking	544.56	529.93	521.02	45.8	45.1	44.8
Gen. Industrial Mach. and Equip.	458.64	470.22	463.39	42.0	43.1	41.3
Electrical Machinery, Equip. and Supplies	403.21	398.40	418.14	40.2	40.0	40.4
Electrical Industrial Apparatus	420.40	417.66	437.67	41.5	41.6	40.6
Transportation Equipment	624.12	627.94	603.46	42.0	42.2	42.2
Instrument and Related Products	360.99	367.38	364.67	38.9	39.0	40.7
Nondurable Goods	437.06	437.88	423.39	41.0	41.0	40.4
Food and Kindred Products	409.77	407.60	396.40	39.9	40.0	39.6
Meat Products	360.51	370.23	354.32	39.4	41.0	39.5
Dairy Products	401.79	393.03	399.37	40.3	39.5	40.3
Textile Mill Products	347.27	342.43	301.35	45.1	43.4	41.0
Apparel and Other Finished Products	257.57	254.39	248.25	38.5	37.3	37.9
Paper and Allied Products	588.19	586.51	571.03	44.9	44.5	44.3
Pulp and Paper Mills	645.78	645.19	622.90	45.8	45.5	45.5
Printing, Publishing and Allied Products	427.19	431.51	420.31	38.8	38.7	37.9
Chemicals and Allied Products	416.85	427.28	395.81	39.4	40.5	37.2
Rubber and Misc. Plastics Products	349.40	349.46	341.34	40.3	40.4	40.3
Leather and Leather Products	259.16	265.10	257.08	38.0	39.1	38.6

WISCONSIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS Unadjusted MARCH	Including Overtime			Excluding Overtime		
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago
All Manufacturing (Incl. Canning)	$10.74	$10.76	$10.64	$10.25	$10.26	$10.17
All Manufacturing (Excl. Canning)	10.76	10.78	10.67	10.27	10.27	10.19
Durable Goods	10.79	10.80	10.74	10.31	10.30	10.27
Lumber and Wood Products (Excl. Furniture)	8.12	8.16	7.99	7.84	7.90	7.75
Furniture and Fixtures	8.52	8.43	8.13	8.27	8.18	7.76
Stone, Clay, and Glass Products	9.75	9.75	9.56	9.16	9.12	8.98
Primary Metal Industries	10.57	10.54	10.19	9.93	9.88	9.57
Iron and Steel Foundries	10.47	10.44	9.99	9.77	9.68	9.35
Fabricated Metal Products	10.29	10.28	10.21	9.71	9.73	9.79
Fabricated Structural Metal Products	10.22	10.09	10.05	9.73	9.70	9.54
Metal Stampings	11.52	11.55	11.20	10.86	10.85	10.78
Machinery (Excl. Electrical)	11.69	11.69	11.64	11.14	11.09	11.05
Engines and Turbines	12.76	12.92	12.92	12.41	12.30	12.23
Farm Machinery and Equipment	12.35	12.32	12.25	11.82	11.65	11.66
Constr.,Mining, Material Handling Machinery	11.73	11.56	11.17	11.10	11.11	10.75
Metalworking Machinery and Equipment	12.51	12.48	12.18	11.69	11.64	11.46
Special Ind. Mach., Excl. Metalworking	11.89	11.75	11.63	11.17	11.06	10.97
Gen. Industrial Mach. and Equip.	10.92	10.91	11.22	10.44	10.35	10.84
Electrical Machinery, Equip. and Supplies	10.03	9.96	10.35	9.67	9.63	9.98
Electrical Industrial Apparatus	10.13	10.04	10.78	9.74	9.70	10.41
Transportation Equipment	14.86	14.88	14.30	14.23	14.23	13.65
Instrument and Related Products	9.28	9.42	8.96	9.07	9.19	8.71
Nondurable Goods	10.66	10.68	10.48	10.16	10.18	10.01
Food and Kindred Products	10.27	10.19	10.01	9.83	9.75	9.60
Meat Products	9.15	9.03	8.97	8.82	8.59	8.61
Dairy Products	9.97	9.95	9.91	9.51	9.50	9.40
Textile Mill Products	7.70	7.89	7.35	7.13	7.41	7.10
Apparel and Other Finished Products	6.69	6.82	6.55	6.56	6.68	6.42
Paper and Allied Products	13.10	13.18	12.89	12.37	12.43	12.14
Pulp and Paper Mills	14.10	14.18	13.69	13.26	13.34	12.82
Printing, Publishing and Allied Products	11.01	11.15	11.09	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Chemicals and Allied Products	10.58	10.55	10.64	10.16	10.14	10.29
Rubber and Misc. Plastics Products	8.67	8.65	8.47	8.33	8.32	8.19
Leather and Leather Products	6.82	6.78	6.66	6.63	6.55	6.51

Section

C SUMMARY OF RECENT WISCONSIN DATA

EARNINGS AND HOURS, MFG. Production Workers (Unadjusted) MARCH	AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS			AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS			AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS				
							INCL. OVERTIME			EXCL. OVERTIME	
	Latest Month	Month Ago	Year Ago	Latest Month	Month Ago	Year Ago	Latest Month	Month Ago	Year Ago	Latest Month	Month Ago
United States	$425.36	$423.10	$411.86	40.9	40.8	40.9	$10.40	$10.37	$10.07	.....	.....
Wisconsin	445.71	446.54	441.56	41.5	41.5	41.5	10.74	10.76	10.64	10.25	10.26
Appleton-Oshkosh (Calumet-Winnebago-Outagamie)	507.21	501.81	486.95	43.5	43.0	43.4	11.66	11.67	11.22	11.08	11.05
Eau Claire (Eau Claire-Chippewa)	423.28	435.12	439.60	40.7	42.0	40.0	10.40	10.36	10.99	9.95	9.89
Green Bay (Brown County)	454.25	469.77	473.06	39.5	41.1	41.1	11.50	11.43	11.51	11.12	10.93
Janesville-Beloit (Rock Co.)	584.76	587.41	491.57	44.3	44.4	39.9	13.20	13.23	12.32	12.51	12.52
Kenosha (County)	526.67	522.03	537.84	41.7	41.3	41.5	12.63	12.67	12.96	12.12	12.15
La Crosse (County)	394.40	391.02	352.66	40.0	39.9	38.5	9.86	9.80	9.16	9.51	9.47
Madison (Dane County)	410.64	414.47	422.28	40.9	41.2	41.4	10.04	10.06	10.20	9.68	9.68
Milwaukee (Milwaukee-Ozaukee-Washington-Waukesha)	477.43	480.24	482.05	41.3	41.4	41.7	11.56	11.60	11.56	11.00	11.00
Racine (County)	427.88	422.97	447.58	39.4	39.2	40.8	10.86	10.79	10.97	10.45	10.35
Sheboygan (County)	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA	INA
Wausau (Marathon County)	427.56	413.51	421.17	42.0	40.5	41.7	10.18	10.21	10.10	9.67	9.78

INA - Information Not Available due to budget reductions

MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT Unadjusted MARCH	(In Thousands)			% CHANGE	
	Latest Mo.	Mo. Ago	Yr. Ago	Mo/Ago	Yr/Ago
United States	19695.0	19653.0	19302.0	0.2%	2.0%
Wisconsin	551.4	550.3	536.6	0.2%	2.8%
Appleton-Oshkosh (Calumet-Winnebago-Outagamie)	52.2	52.3	51.2	-0.2%	2.0%
Eau Claire (Eau Claire-Chippewa)	11.4	11.7	10.9	-2.6%	4.6%
Green Bay (Brown County)	25.4	24.8	23.7	2.4%	7.2%
Janesville-Beloit (Rock County)	18.1	18.4	17.9	-1.6%	1.1%
Kenosha (County)	11.7	11.6	14.3	0.9%	-18.2%
La Crosse (County)	10.9	11.0	11.1	-0.9%	-1.8%
Madison (Dane County)	25.1	24.8	23.7	1.2%	5.9%
Milwaukee (Milwaukee-Ozaukee-Washington-Waukesha)	176.9	177.0	170.7	-0.1%	3.6%
Racine (County)	26.1	26.4	25.5	-1.1%	2.4%
Sheboygan (County)	INA	INA	INA		
Wausau (Marathon County)	13.7	13.6	13.0	0.7%	5.4%

THE GREAT MINIMUM WAGE DEBATE

Solid, incontestable evidence either condemning or supporting an increase...simply does not exist.

By Joseph Tumpach, Jr.

Almost inevitably and with some regularity, minimum wage legislation surfaces on the current affairs agenda. And, it stirs controversy. Popular sentiment to increase the minimum wage seems a spreading contagion to some, but a vital spring shower to others.

Employers, particularly those who depend on youth, fear a higher minimum wage will demolish already small profit margins. Youth are, they say, inexperienced and unskilled workers and won't make up for higher wages with greater productivity. Many fear that a higher minimum wage will force some establishments out of business, causing more unemployment. Thus, any new minimum wage bill passed will likely contain a training wage clause, allowing employers to maintain peak teenage-employment levels in summer.

Alternately, higher-wage proponents argue that the minimum wage has not changed since 1981, while inflation has risen by 28 percent. Those already at the bottom of the wage scale are carrying a disproportionate share of the brunt of inflation. The minimum wage of $3.35 per hour, unchanged since 1981, is worth in buying power today only $2.62. To achieve buying ability that has kept up with inflation since 1981, the minimum wage would need to be $4.28 today.

Some counter that minimum-wage earners are mainly teens and part-time workers, not the primary earners in families. And some state that increasing the minimum wage now will precipitate a recession.

Solid, incontestable evidence, either condemning or supporting an increase of the minimum wage, simply does not exist. That is because past increases of the wage basement occur in times of both economic expansion and recession. We can not necessarily attribute employment change or business growth change to either one or the other. We do not know if there is a minimum wage at which workers will benefit substantially and at which employers will not be crushed by expensive labor costs.

We do know fairly accurately how many hourly-paid workers throughout the nation worked at or below the minimum wage last year. That amounted to a little less than four million wage earners in 1988. It amounted to 3.4 percent of the national employed population or about 6.5 percent of those working for hourly wages.

For perspective, those throughout the country working at or below the minimum wage in 1988 equaled about one and a half times the total number of job holders in Wisconsin. However, we have no figures on the number of Wisconsin workers employed at or below the minimum wage. If we assume that the nation-wide percentage applies to Wisconsin's total employed, the state had about 160 thousand workers earning minimum wage or less during 1988. That estimate may be a bit large, since Wisconsin employs a slightly smaller

portion of its workers in the retail and service industries, sectors which tend to have lower average wages.

We cannot automatically equate part-time employment with low wages. True, two-thirds of all minimum wage earners, nationally, are part-time workers. But, that leaves another third, or about 1.3 million workers, who work full-time for minimum wages. Again assuming the national rate is applicable to Wisconsin, the state, last year, had over fifty thousand full-time minimum wage workers.

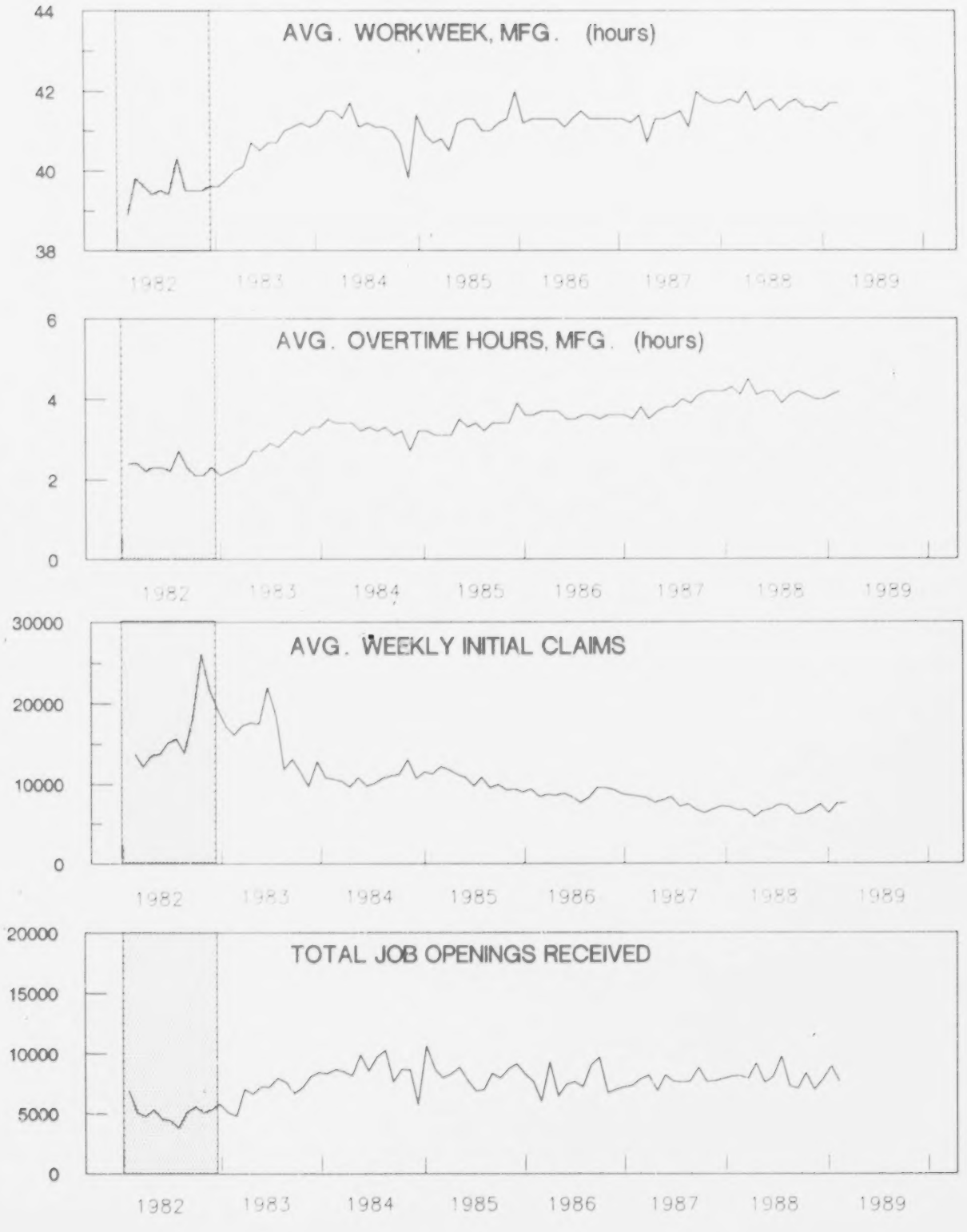
With the national economy now operating at full-employment levels, new labor supplies are scarce. That implies that employers are being forced to pay higher wages for once minimum wage work. There is some evidence of that. From 1987 to 1988, the employment level of hourly-wage earners increased by 1.3 million. At the same time, minimum wage employment decreased 770 thousand. Its unlikely the decrease resulted merely from employers switching part-timers to full-time hours and paying a little extra as incentive ... about 37 percent of the minimum wage employment decrease was in employment of already full-time workers.

Most part-time workers choose to work a short schedule. Throughout Wisconsin in 1988, about eighty-two percent, four out of five, worked part-time voluntarily. Only one out of five part-time workers wanted full-time work. Among those 16 through 19 years old, voluntary part-time work amounted to nearly 87 percent of the part-time employed. However, that does not imply that four out of five part-time workers do not really need a better income. Many must work to supplement household income, but also have family obligations or are in school.

Do teenagers, indeed, compose the bulk of minimum wage workers? Is minimum wage really important if most low-tier wage earners are secondary family earners working for designer jeans and top-line athletic shoes? Throughout the nation in 1988, nearly a million and a half workers were teenage workers earning minimum wage or less. Those sixteen through nineteen year olds, however, make up thirty-six percent of all minimum wage earners. If we group the minimum wage earners by 16 through 24 year olds, a group including college students who work for education expenses, the share climbs to 57 percent of all minimum wage earners. If our national economic growth depends on increasing productivity which, in turn, depends on increasing the skill level of our labor force, the argument that a minimum wage increase is unnecessary because teenagers compose most of our minimum wage workers seems, simply, out of line with our national economic interest.

What we have not accomplished by legislation, we may realize because of demographics. That is, a smaller supply of workers entering the labor force may cause employers to offer higher wages in competing for workers. From 1987 to 1988 the number of workers age 16 through 24 who were paid hourly wages decreased by five thousand throughout the nation. At the same time, the 16 through 24 year old minimum wage earners decreased 407 thousand. In Wisconsin, the 16 through 24 year old population will continue decreasing through 1990 at least, and that will mean a scarce supply of labor in the youth labor market.

D CYCLICAL INDICATORS



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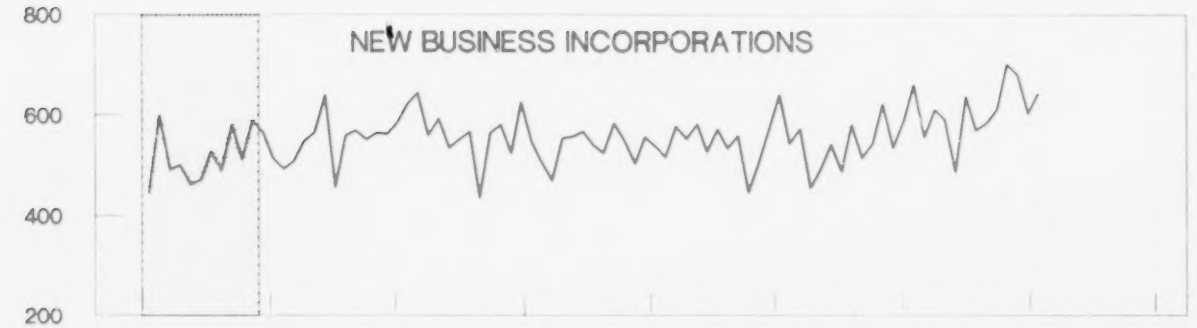

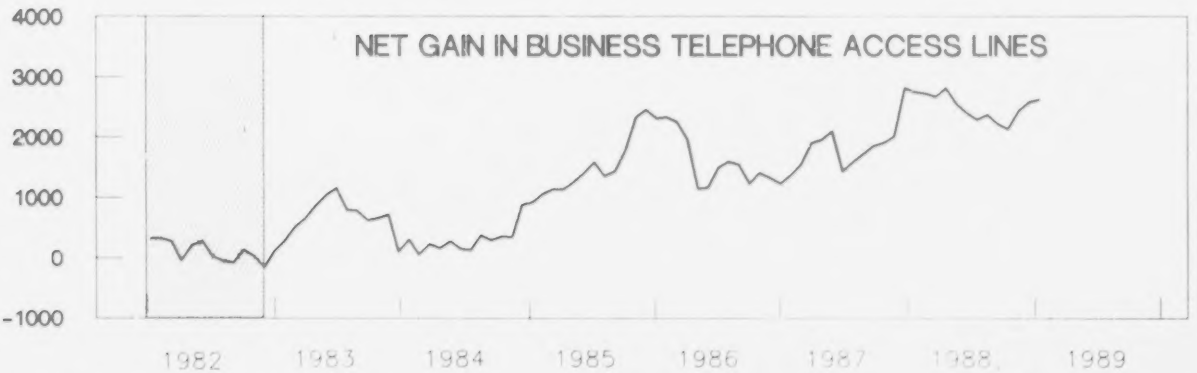

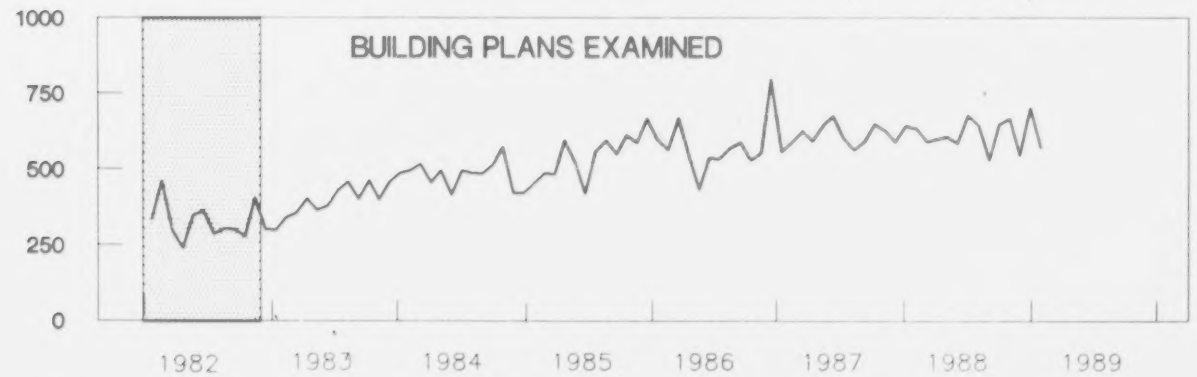

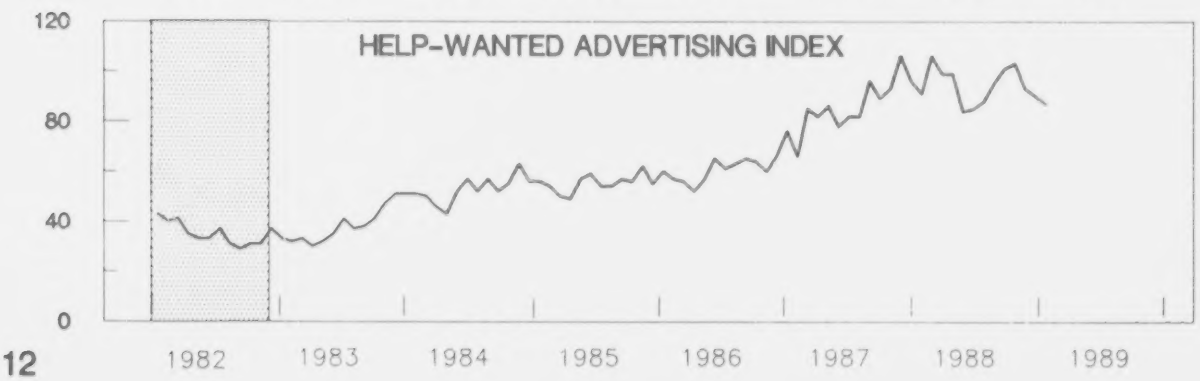

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